

The Insider

www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

September 26, 2008

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a location near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Blog: 2008 General Election Ballot Proposals

At the November 4th general election, you will have a chance to play an important role in establishing Michigan public policy. Not only will you have the opportunity to select candidates of your choice, but two statewide ballot proposals will also be presented to you for your consideration.

I have included information below to help you familiarize yourself with the arguments on both sides of these two proposals. Included is the actual language that will appear on the ballot along with brief analyses of the important issues at hand. The analyses do not necessarily reflect my views but serve to bring you the strongest arguments for and against each proposal so that you can make an informed decision on these issues.

I hope that you find this information to be of value. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to e-mail me.

Official Ballot Proposal Language Proposal 08-1

A LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE TO PERMIT THE USE AND CULTIVATION OF MARIJUANA FOR SPECIFIED MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The proposed law would:

- Permit physician approved use of marijuana by registered patients with debilitating medical conditions including cancer, glaucoma, HIV, AIDS, hepatitis C, MS and other conditions as may be approved by the Department of Community Health.
- Permit registered individuals to grow limited amounts of marijuana for qualifying patients in an enclosed, locked facility.

- Require Department of Community Health to establish an identification card system for patients qualified to use marijuana and individuals qualified to grow marijuana.
- Permit registered and unregistered patients and primary caregivers to assert medical reasons for using marijuana as a defense to any prosecution involving marijuana.

Should this proposal be adopted? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

People Voting YES Argue That:

- Allowing the medical use of marijuana by individuals suffering from debilitating medical conditions opens another avenue for the treatment of these conditions or obtaining relief from their symptoms.
- The proposed law places conditions on the use of marijuana by qualified patients and contains safeguards to prevent abuse.

People Voting NO Argue That:

- Marijuana, when smoked, is a dangerous drug without any accepted medical use, and prescription drugs containing medically useful compounds found in marijuana are already available to patients who may benefit from them.
- The proposed law will make it more difficult for law enforcement to control this harmful drug.

Official Ballot Proposal Language Proposal 08-2

A PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ADDRESS HUMAN EMBRYO AND HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH IN MICHIGAN

The proposed constitutional amendment would:

- Expand use of human embryos for any research permitted under federal law subject to the following limits: the embryos --
 - are created for fertility treatment purposes;
 - are not suitable for implantation or are in excess of clinical needs;
 - would be discarded unless used for research;
 - were donated by the person seeking fertility treatment.
- Provide that stem cells cannot be taken from human embryos more than 14 days after cell division begins.
- Prohibit any person from selling or purchasing human embryos for stem cell research.
- Prohibit state and local laws that prevent, restrict or discourage stem cell research, future therapies and cures.

Should this proposal be adopted? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

People Voting YES Argue That:

- The opportunity to conduct embryonic stem cell research is currently limited by one of the nation's most restrictive regulatory systems.
- Many scientists believe that embryonic stem cell research has the best potential to treat and cure certain diseases which currently have no cure, such as juvenile diabetes. This stem cell research has the potential to save millions of lives and improve the quality of life for millions more.
- This proposal would not prevent continued research with other types of stem cells; it would just expand embryonic stem cell research.
- This proposal would only allow researchers, with donors' consent, to use leftover embryos from fertility clinics that would otherwise be thrown away.
- It would also ban the sale and purchase of human embryos for stem cell research and would leave in place Michigan's current ban on human cloning.

People Voting NO Argue That:

- While a number of cures and therapies have been developed from adult stem cell research, none have been developed from embryonic stem cell research.
- Recent breakthroughs from adult stem cell research and the use of umbilical cord cells have shown promising results without destroying human embryos.
- Since human embryonic stem cell research is already legal in Michigan and is funded with private money, this proposal is really about allowing the use of state taxpayers' money to fund this research.
- This proposal would also prohibit the state or local units of government from enacting new laws or ordinances to regulate and restrict experimentation on live human embryos in the future.
- This proposal does not protect in the Constitution the current ban on human cloning and does not prevent changing this law in the future to legalize cloning.

Mickey's Notes and Updates

FINACIAL LITERACY BILL HEADS TO GOVERNOR FOR APPROVAL

My legislation that would allow financial literacy courses to count towards meeting the state's high school graduation requirements passed the Michigan House on September 23rd and will head to the Governor for approval.

Under the state's current standards, students are required to successfully complete at least 4 credits in math, including in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, to receive a high school diploma. Senate Bill 834 would add financial literacy to the courses allowed to fulfill the 4-credit requirement.

During this time of home foreclosures, bankruptcies, and financial market turmoil, I believe students would be well served by a course in financial literacy. Students often take on school loans and can run up significant credit card debt. By allowing students the flexibility in the curriculum to take a financial literacy course, they would benefit from learning to critically analyze a diverse range of topics such as the pros and cons of renting or buying a house, the benefits and pitfalls of leasing or purchasing a car, what an adjustable rate mortgage is, what are interest rates and how they operate, and whether to take their lottery winnings up front or whether to take them spread out over 20 years. Learning these important financial concepts, among others, would serve them well in the future.

MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE PASSES ENERGY LEGISLATION TO CREATE JOBS, PROTECT CONSUMERS

The Michigan Legislature on September 18 voted to pass a bipartisan, comprehensive renewable energy package that will stimulate economic growth and the creation of “green jobs” while saving ratepayers \$4.3 billion in potential future energy costs. Senate Bill 213, Senate Bill 1048 and House Bill 5524 ensures that Michigan’s energy needs will be met by clean and renewable energy resources while specifically protecting consumers against large rate increases. The legislation would:

- Create a 10 percent Renewable Portfolio Standard that will encourage investment in Michigan’s renewable energy sector and create new manufacturing jobs in the wind and solar industries;
- Save ratepayers \$4.3 billion in avoided costs over the next twenty years by not paying for unnecessary new base load plants;
- Diversify Michigan’s economy as well as its electricity generation portfolio, insulating the state from future fuel crises;
- Create energy efficiency standards to reduce energy used, ultimately keeping costs down;
- Include a “net metering” law that will allow consumers to sell renewable energy that they produce back to utility companies;
- Provide an income tax credit for ratepayers to offset a portion of their investments in renewable energy for Michigan;
- Ensure that money will not be spent on renewable energy technology unless it is less expensive than new coal plants;
- Ensure that money will not be spent on energy efficiency measures unless it is shown that such measures will save more money than is being spent.

In addition, Michigan has been identified by the United States Department of Energy as one of the top eight states in the nation for potential wind production. The Department also recognizes Michigan as one of four states that will create over 30,000 manufacturing jobs in the wind sector alone. This new legislation opens the door for the state to become a major player in the fast-growing renewable energy sector.

SENATE PASSES LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANES

On September 17, the Michigan Senate adopted legislation that would establish high-occupancy vehicle lanes and regulations for its use. High-occupancy vehicle lanes are special freeway or highway lanes that are reserved only for cars that contain two or more people, including the driver. Drivers caught using these lanes without a passenger would face a \$100 fine.

These car pool lanes are used throughout the country as a way to encourage drivers to share rides. By reducing the volume of cars on the road, these HOV lanes wouldn’t just provide a faster, more reliable commute for Michigan workers, they would also save drivers money that would normally be spent filling up their gas tanks as well as reduce the amount of dangerous emissions being pumped into the atmosphere and polluting our state.

SENATE PASSES SOLAR-POWER TAX CREDIT BILL

In an effort to encourage businesses to relocate to Michigan, the Senate recently passed House Bill 5898 that would provide tax credits for businesses that manufacture solar power. Specifically, the bill would amend the Michigan Business Tax (MBT) Act to allow a taxpayer that was engaged in the research, development, or manufacturing of solar power or photovoltaic energy, photovoltaic systems, and other photovoltaic technology to claim a refundable credit against the MBT. Supporters of the bill, both Democrats and Republicans, believe that the legislation will help to attract business to the state.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO HELP PROTECT CONSUMERS AGAINST GAS-GOUGING

Last week, my Senate Democratic colleagues and I introduced legislation that would give the attorney general additional tools to investigate price-fixing and gas-gouging at Michigan's gas pumps. The legislation would amend the Michigan Consumer Protection Act by giving the attorney general the ability to issue a civil investigative demand against companies believed to be in violation of the act without having to first obtain a court-ordered subpoena based on probable cause. With these amendments, the attorney general would be able to more efficiently investigate a potential violation of the act.

As Hurricane Ike hit Texas earlier this month, anxious motorists flocked to gas stations even as prices increased. Michigan's attorney general is reportedly already looking into more than 20 consumer complaints about potential incidents of gas gouging. For further protection, the House of Representatives recently passed similar legislation that will help prevent consumers from falling victim to gas gouging.

Coffee Hours

In response to requests from constituents, I have added coffee hours in Roseville and during the daytime. Here are my next scheduled coffee hours. Please feel to stop on by or make an appointment by calling my office.

September 29, 2008 1:30-2:30 p.m. Location: Biggby Coffee (26740 Gratiot, south of I-696) Roseville	October 30, 2008 7-8 p.m. Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library (35891 South Gratiot) Clinton Township
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Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Various Times-check local listings
(Comcast Channel 18/WOW Channel 10)

Contact My Office

Website: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/switalski>

Email: senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov

Lansing Office

Senator Mickey Switalski
Senate District 10
410 Farnum
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909

(866) 303-0110 toll free
(517) 373-7315
Fax-(517) 373-3126

District Office

28311 Utica Road
Roseville, MI 48066

Monday through Friday
9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

(586) 774-2430
Fax-(586) 774-0012